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Lower bail is asked for ex-CIA suspect

Washington (AP)—Lawyers for Edwin P. Wilson, a former Central Intelligence Agency operative charged with aiding Libyan terrorists, argued yesterday that his bail should be reduced because he warned the government of an alleged plot earlier this year to assassinate the chief prosecutor in the Wilson case.

They said he also provided information which led to the indictment of a Chicago firm for selling arms to Libya.

However, Justice Department sources who declined to be identified said no indictment had been returned in the Chicago matter.

The arguments were contained in a motion filed in U.S. District Court here to reduce the \$20 million bail on which the 54-year-old former spy has been held here since an elaborate government scheme lured him out of Libya to his arrest in New York City June 15.

Top Justice Department officials have said they do not consider Mr. Wilson a good bail risk and have won the right to a hearing before U.S. District Judge John Pratt to oppose any effort by Mr. Wilson to post bail.

No date was set immediately for a hearing on the bail motion filed by Mr. Wilson's attorneys, Herald Price Fahringer and John A. Keats. Mr. Wilson's attorneys did not offer any specific suggestion for a new bail figure.

In an affidavit, Mr. Fahringer said that since Mr. Wilson's indictment in April, 1980, he had been "working with the government toward making arrangements for his return to the United States and the disposition of these unfounded charges."

Mr. Fahringer disclosed that in early May of this year, "Wilson learned that arrangements had been made in the Middle East to have the assistant U.S. attorney E. Lawrence Barcella and his family killed." Mr. Fahringer said Mr. Wilson immediately warned Mr. Barcella through Mr. Keats "and arrangements were made to have Mr. Barcella guarded by U.S. marshals for more than a month."

Mr. Fahringer gave no further details of the plot.

Commenting on the motion overall, Mr. Barcella said, "There are inaccuracies in there and our response will be forthcoming very soon." He declined to elaborate.

Mr. Fahringer argued that Mr. Wilson was already in Libya when he was indicted and thus never fled prosecution. "When he was made aware of this indictment he immediately engaged an attorney to contact the assistant U.S. attorney so that he could cooperate in their overall investigation."

Mr. Fahringer then detailed how Mr. Barcella agreed to meet Mr. Wilson in Rome under guarantees Mr. Wilson would not be arrested. He said Mr. Wilson also supplied at that meeting information concerning the whereabouts of two Cubans, Jose Suarez and Virgilio Paz, wanted in connection with the assassination in Washington of former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier.

Mr. Fahringer said that on April 26 of this year, Mr. Barcella offered to hold a similar meeting with Mr. Wilson in Turkey, proposing similar guarantees of Mr. Wilson's safe conduct from Libya to Turkey and back in return for his cooperation in the case. But he said that meeting never occurred.

Mr. Fahringer also said Mr. Wilson's Swiss lawyer and London secretary had turned over to the government records of his consultant corporations, formed after he left the CIA in 1970 after 15 years.

Mr. Barcella said Mr. Keats did inform him of such a plot last February. "Wilson told Keats who told me that was the case, but I don't know whether it was the case," Mr. Barcella said. "No attempted assassination was ever made that I know of."

Mr. Fahringer also disclosed that Mr. Wilson had furnished Mr. Barcella, chief prosecutor in the Wilson case, during a face-to-face meeting in Rome in July, 1981, with "additional information about who was supplying illegal equipment to Libya" which "resulted in the indictment of a Chicago firm for supplying arms to Libya." The firm was not named and Mr. Fahringer gave no further details of Mr. Wilson's information.

"This compelling documentation clearly indicates that Mr. Wilson was not, in the usual sense of the word, a fugitive from justice," Mr. Fahringer argued.

Mr. Wilson was lured to the Dominican Republic in a scheme promoted by a businessman, Ernest Keiser. Justice Department sources have said Mr. Wilson was offered the hope of a new safe haven in the Dominican Republic. Mr. Fahringer called the scheme illegal and said he planned to challenge it later.

Mr. Wilson has a half interest in \$7.5 million in property, including a 3,500-acre cattle and corn farm in Upperville, Va., and a Washington town house, Mr. Fahringer said. Mr. Wilson's ex-wife, Barbara, who divorced him in 1981, holds the other half interest.

Mr. Fahringer said the land would be sufficient collateral to post reasonable bail and insure Mr. Wilson's later appearance in court.

Mr. Fahringer also disclosed that Mr. Wilson has glaucoma, an eye disease, "and a serious prostate condition which may be cancerous."

Mr. Wilson is charged with illegally supplying plastic explosives to Libya, recruiting ex-Green Berets to train Libyan terrorists and conspiring to assassinate for \$1 million a Libyan dissident in Egypt. Mr. Wilson has denied all the charges.